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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

Letter from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations dated 3 November 1993 addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the appeal to the General Assembly by the participants in the Moscow international conference on the problems of small indigenous peoples (annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 114.

(Signed) Y. VORONTSOV
Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation

Annex

APPEAL TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY BY THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE PROBLEMS OF SMALL INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Moscow international conference on the problems of small indigenous peoples, held in Moscow from 13 to 18 September 1993, notes the heightening of tension in inter-ethnic relations in various parts of the world. Such tensions frequently lead to human suffering and large-scale violations of human rights and, at the end of the twentieth century, continue to threaten certain peoples with ethnic and cultural genocide.

We, the representatives of small indigenous aboriginal peoples, parliaments, Governments and social organizations and movements, assembled in Moscow to participate in the work of the international conference on the problems of small indigenous peoples,

Aware of the conclusions and recommendations on the question of indigenous peoples drawn up and approved by the World Conference on Human Rights held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993 and by the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and of the consultations under the auspices of the United Nations on the problems of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Far East held in Khabarovsk in September 1993,

Bearing in mind that every human being should enjoy all the rights and freedoms proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights without distinction as to race, colour, sex, language or religion,

Bearing in mind that States have an obligation under the Charter of the United Nations to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Convinced that indigenous peoples are full members of the human family and as a result should enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of any kind,

Recognizing that 1993 has been proclaimed the International Year for the World's Indigenous People by the United Nations,

Noting that the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, called upon States to ensure the full and free participation of indigenous people in all aspects of society,

Noting with concern that in many countries indigenous peoples face, in a variety of areas of social life, significant problems that call for immediate and effective solution,

Have solemnly adopted the following appeal to the General Assembly of the United Nations:

1. The Conference calls upon the General Assembly of the United Nations to take active measures to recognize, promote and observe the rights of indigenous people, including the right to use their own name and to express their identity freely;

- The right to have official status and to establish their own self-governing bodies;

- The right to preserve traditional economic structures and ways of life in areas with a high concentration of indigenous peoples;

- The right to participate freely and on an equal basis in the economic, social and political development of the country in which they live;

- The right to establish and administer an education system;

- The right freely to confess and to practise religious faiths;

- The right of free access to the land and its natural resources;

- The right to preserve a language and use it for administrative and educational purposes.

2. The Conference requests the General Assembly of the United Nations to declare an international decade for the world's indigenous peoples from January 1994 to 2004 and to consider granting to the Moscow international conference on the problems of small indigenous peoples the status of a continuously operating forum within the framework of the United Nations for the entire period of the international decade for the world's indigenous peoples.

3. The Conference calls upon the General Assembly of the United Nations to take all necessary steps to eradicate any manifestations of discrimination and infringement of the rights of small indigenous peoples.

4. The Conference calls upon the General Assembly of the United Nations to further the establishment of special-purpose funds and mechanisms to solve the problems facing the indigenous peoples of the world.